

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE DONNA F. EDWARDS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE**

FEBRUARY 27, 2013

“A REVIEW OF THE SPACE LEADERSHIP PRESERVATION ACT OF 2013”

Chairman Palazzo, as we start our first subcommittee hearing of the 113th Congress, I'd just like to say how much I am looking forward to working with you.

We have a lot on our plate this Congress, including helping to set the future direction of our nation's civil space program through the upcoming NASA reauthorization.

Like you, I consider NASA's space and aeronautics programs an integral part of America's innovation agenda, and I want to work to ensure that they remain strong and fitted for the challenges of the 21st century.

Which brings us to today's hearing. And I'd like to start by joining you in welcoming all of our witnesses, including Chairman Wolf and Rep. Culberson, the original sponsors of the *Space Leadership Preservation Act of 2013*, to give us their perspectives on what it will take for America's space program to remain preeminent and vital.

Or as the stated purpose of the bill would put it: *“To ensure that the American space program will always be the best in the world, and to ensure that America will always be able to preserve and protect our leadership in the exploration of outer space, the high ground of the future”*.

That's a sentiment I whole-heartedly endorse, and I look forward to hearing your views, as I do to the views of the witnesses on our second panel.

Specifically, this bill seeks to set in statute the term of the NASA Administrator, create a Board of Directors for the Agency, and direct that Board, among other functions, to create a budget for NASA that would be transmitted to the Congress each year in advance of the President's fiscal year budget request.

It has been said that this bill attempts to model NASA's management on that of the National Science Foundation. However, NASA and NSF are very different agencies.

One of NSF's main functions is issuing grants for research; NASA, on the other hand is an R&D agency with multiple missions and development programs, as well as operational responsibilities for the International Space Station.

And the National Science Board, which governs NSF jointly with its Director, does not provide a budget to the Congress independently of the Director, as is proposed in this legislation. I would also note that a statutory term for the Administrator doesn't necessarily ensure stability at an agency. For example, the current NSF Director has announced his intention to leave NSF only 2 ½ years into his six-year statutory term.

Yet these proposals don't suggest to me improvement or models of agency administration, they suggest a desire to mimic how businesses are run, and I don't see the value in turning NASA into a business.

And while I also have questions about the implications of these proposals for the implementation of Congressional direction spelled out in legislation, as well as potential unintended consequences, I have a bigger concern right now for NASA, the rest of the Federal Government, and the Nation as a whole.

We are now days away from the possibility of drastic cuts caused by sequestration.

So while today's hearing will consider legislation that seeks to stabilize NASA's direction, the sad truth is, we in the Congress have and are continuing to contribute to the agency's funding instability and a mismatch of resources with expectations.

Year after year, NASA has had to redirect scarce resources and time to replan programs and projects, not because of instability at the top of the agency, but because of the uncertainties caused by flat or decreased funding for the agency, continuing resolutions, and, now the threat of sequestration.

If we expect NASA to do great things, as I know its employees can because they do so each and every day, then let's give it the resources it needs and when it needs them.

A few months ago, I watched Curiosity land on Mars, along with dozens of young people at the Goddard Space Flight Center. Their enthusiasm was electrifying; they are this Nation's future.

We can't let the passion and dreams of those young people evaporate due to our inability to adequately fund NASA.

And in that regard, Mr. Chairman, I think we need a challenging and compelling goal for our human space program, one that will allow our young people to know where we are aiming and when we want to get there. We need a goal that will bring out the best in us as a Nation, as great national challenges have done in the past.

NASA's future and its value both to our Nation and to the next generation are where I hope to focus this subcommittee's attention as we go forward in the 113th Congress.

I yield back the balance of my time